

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-05 SAJ-01 SAM-01 IO-11 ARA-06 EB-07 AGR-05

SCCT-01 OPR-02 COME-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /104 W

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P R 191236Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5711

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMXONSUL PONTA DELGADA 1055

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 0381

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO, PINS, EAGR

SUBJECT: WEEKEND DEVELOPMENTS

REFS: (A) LISBON 0308 (DTG 151533Z JAN 76), (B) LISBON 0370

(DTG 171355Z JAN 76), (C) LISBON 0371 (DTG 171404Z

JAN 76)

SUMMARY: ESTIMATED 30,000 TO 40,000 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED WITHOUT
INCIDENT IN COMMUNIST-BACKED RALLY JAN 17 TO PROTEST GOVERNMENT
AUSTERITY MEASURES. SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS SAID
JAN 17 THAT SANTA MARIA AIRPORT COULD "NOT BE USED, EVEN ON A
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TEMPORARY BASIS, FOR SUPPORT OF ANY WARRING ANGOLAN MOVEMENTS,"

AND THAT COBANS HAD BEEN SO INFORMED. END SUMMARY.

1. COMMUNIST-BACKED RALLY: CROWD ESTIMATED AT FROM 30,000 TO 40,000 PEOPLE TOOK PART IN COMMUNIST-BACKED RALLY JAN 17 (REF A) TO PROTEST GOVERNMENT AUSTERITY MEASURES. WELL-BEHAVED CROWD HEARD SPEAKERS DEMAND THAT PRIVILEGED CLASSES BE MADE TO BEAR BURDEN OF ECONOMIC CRISIS AND APPORVED BY ACCLAMATION MOTION CALLING UPON PRESIDENT AND REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL TO LIFT FREEZE ON SALARY NEGOTIATIONS AND REDUCE PRICES. ALTHOUGH ORGANIZED UNDER "NON-PARTISAN" AUSPICES OF THIRTEEN LISBON AREA TRADE UNIONS, RALLY HAD RECEIVED FROMAL SUPPORT NOT ONLY OF COMMUNISTS, BUT OF ALL BUT ONE OF FAR LEFT POLITICAL PARTIES FORMERLY UNITED IN UNITARY REVOLUTIONARY FRONT (FUR). ON JAN 18, SAME FAR LEFT GROUP THAT HAD ORGANIZED UNIMPRESSIVE JAN 16 DEMONSTRATION (REF B) AGAINST GOVERNMENT AUSTERITY MEASURES SPONSERED SALE OF COOPERATIVE-GROWN VEGETABLES IN LISBON TO DEMONSTRATE ADVANTAGES OF ELIMINATING MIDDLEMEN. SALE ENDED IN SQUABBLING WHEN THERE WERE NOT ENOUGH VEGETABLES TO GO AROUND.

2. CUBAN FLIGHTS THROUGH AZORES: SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS MEDEIROS FERREIRA WHEN QUERIED ABOUT THE CUBAN FLIGHTS FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF JAN 17 SAID THAT "WE CANNOT ALLOW SANTA MARIA AIRPORT TO BE USED EVEN ON A TEMPORARY BASIS, FOR SUPPORT FOR ANY OF THE WARRING ANGOLAN MOVEMENTS". HE SAID CUBAN GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN MADE AWARE OF GOP STANCE.

3. MELO ANTUNES ON POLITICAL SITUATION: INTERVIEWED JAN 17 IN VIENNA, FOREIGN MINISTER MELO ANTUNES MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

--PRINCIPAL DANGER IN PORTUGAL NOW CAME FROM EXTREME RIGHT, WHICH SOUGHT A RETURN TO FACISM, RATHER THAT FROM THE COMMUNISTS

--EVENTS OF NOV 25 DEMONSTRATED THAT EXTREME LEFT WITHIN ARMED FORCES WERE NOT SO STRONG AS HAD BEEN THOUGHT.

--COMMUNISTS HAVE SOUGHT TO DISCREDIT SIXTH GOVERNMENT THROUGH DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST AUSTERITY MEASURES DESPITE FACT THAT IT WAS COMMUNISTS THEMSELVES WHO CREATED THE DESPARATE ECONOMIC
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SITUATION WHICH MADE THESE MEASURES NECESSARY.

--EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT POLITICAL LIFE IN PORTUGAL CANNOT YET BE GOVERNED BY THE "FREE DEMOCRATIC RULES." THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO CONSOLIDATE DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL DURING THE NEXT THREE OR FOUR YEARS. PRESIDENTIAL AND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD DURING THIS PERIOD.

4. LEAKING OF NOV 25 REPORT: SEVERAL EMBASSY CONTACTS, INCLUDING NEWSPAPER REPORTERS HAVE NOW SEEN COPIES OF THE PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE NOV 25 COUP ATTEMPT (REF C). IN HIS JAN 18 TELEVISION DISCUSSION OF THE REPORT, REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MEMBER CPT MARQUES JUNIOR DEFENDED THE INTEGRITY OF THE REPORT BUT SAID NOTHING ABOUT THE CONTENT. HE ANNOUNCED THAT REPORT WOULD BE RELEASED TO PUBLIC ON JAN 20. SOCIALIST LEADER SOARES MENTIONED TO AMBASSADOR BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR HELSINGOR THAT HE HAD BEEN SURPRISED AT REPORTS DEMONSTRATION OF COMMUNISTS AND EX-GEN OTELO CARVALHO'S INVOLVEMENT IN CONSPIRACY.

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5. BOMBS: BOMB ATTACKS AGAINST LEFTISTS CONTINUED IN NORTH:

--VIANA DO CASTELO: POWERFUL EXPLOSION JAN 17 BADLY DAMAGED OFFICES OF PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP).

--SANTO TIRSO: BOMB WENT OFF JAN 17 NEAR HOUSE OF MEMBER OF ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION OF SANTO TIRSO MUNICIPALITY, 17 MILES NORTH OF OPORTO. MEMBER REPORTEDLY HAD RECENTLY ABANDONED SOCIALIST PARTY.

-- VISEU: AUTOMOBILE BELONGING TO MEMBER OF FELLOW-TRAVELLING PORTUGUESE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MDP/CDE) WAS DESTROYED BY CONFIDENTIAL

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EXPLOSION JAN 18.

6. MORE ON AGRARIAN REFORM: IN SEPARATE COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST RALLIES JAN 17, AGRARIAN REFORM WAS AGAIN THE DOMINANT THEME.

--PCP RALLY: SPEAKING TO COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP) RALLY IN BRAGA, PCP LEADER CUNHAL AGAIN LINKED THE SUCCESS OF THE REVOLUTION DIRECTLY WITH THE SUCCESS OF THE AGRARIAN REFORM PROGRAM. CUNHAL ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN ABUSES COMMITTED IN IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM IN SOME AREAS. BUT, HE ADDED, IF ABUSES HAD OCCURRED, THE WORKERS THEMSELVES WOULD CORRECT THEM.

--1 RALLY: SPEAKING TO SOCIALIST (PS) SUPPORTERS IN OPORTO ON THE SAME DAY, AGRICULTURE MINISTER LOPES CARDOSO LASHED OUT AT CRITICS OF AGRARIAN REFORM AND LOPES CARDOSO SAID THE CHOICE WAS CLEAR: EITHER CAPITALISM OR SOCIALISM. HE SHARPLY ATTACKED THE STANDS OF BOTH THE POPULAR DEMOCRATS (PPD) AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CENTER PARTY (CDS). THE FORMER, HE SAID, REPRESENTED THE LARGE LANDOWNERS; THE LATTER REPRESENTED THE INTERMEDIARIES. LOPES CARDOSO SAID THAT ABUSES COMMITTED IN THE NAME OF AGRARIAN REFORM HAD UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN COMMITTED AND COULD NOT BE IGNORED. BUT, HE POINTED OUT, THOSE WHO NOW SHED SO MANY "CROCODILE TEARS" FOR THE FARMERS OF THE ALENJEJO WERE STRANGELY SILENT OVER THE PLIGHT OF THE RURAL WORKERS DURING THE SALAZAR PERIOD WHEN LAND WAS AN INSTRUMENT OF EXPLOITATION. LOPES CARDOSO SAID HIS RESPONSE TO THE ULTIMATUM FROM FARMERS AT RIO MAIOR HAD BEEN ENTIRELY NEGATIVE. IF HE WAS REVERSED BY EITHER THE GOVERNMENT OR THE COUNCIL OF THE REVOLUTION, HE SAID HE WOULD NOT HESITATE TO RESIGN. COMMENT: BOTH STATEMENTS WERE MADE WITH AN EYE ON THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS. FOR CUNHAL IT WAS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME OLD PARTY LINE: AGRARIAN REFORM IS A REVOLUTIONARY VICTORY WHICH THE PCP WILL NOT ALLOW TO BE REVERSED. LOPES CARDOSO'S REMARKS WERE HIS STRONGEST ATTACKS YET ON THE PPD AND CDS. THEY INDICATE THAT THE SOCIALISTS DO NOT INTEND TO BE OUTFLANKED ON THE LEFT ON THE AGRARIAN REFORM ISSUE BY THE PCP.

7. COMMENT: LIKE THEIR VEGETABLES, FAR LEFT AND COMMUNIST-SUPPORTED WEEKEND RALLIES WERE SMALL POTATOES. CROWDS AND COPS WERE BOTH ON THEIR BEST BEHAVIOR AND THERE WERE NO INCIDENTS.

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CALM, HOWEVER, IS NOT LIKELY TO LAST FOR LONG.
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